MOTORCYCLE STUNTMAN JOHNNY BLAZE HAS ALWAYS HAD HIS HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE... AND MADE ALL THE WRONG DECISIONS. WHEN HIS FOSTER FATHER WAS DYING OF CANCER, JOHNNY SOLD HIS SOUL TO THE DEVIL FOR A CURE. THOUGH THE CANCER WENT INTO REMISSION, A DANGEROUS STUNT CLAIMED THE MAN'S LIFE ANYWAY... AND THE DEVIL RETURNED FOR BLAZE'S SOUL.

JOHNNY WAS CURSED TO SERVE AS THE GHOST RIDER, A HORRIFYING, LEATHER-CLAD BIKER WHOSE SKULL FACE WAS LIT BY A FLAME THAT COULD NOT BE EXTINGUISHED. WHENEVER HE WAS IN THE PRESENCE OF EVIL, HE WOULD TRANSFORM INTO THIS SPIRIT WARRIOR AND DISPENSE BLOODY RETRIBUTION UPON EARTH'S SINNERS.

THAT IS, UNTIL JOHNNY BLAZE WAS CAST INTO HELL.

EVER SINCE, HE SPENT HIS DAYS RACING A DEMONIC HORDE TO HELL'S GATES, REACHING TOWARDS IMPOSSIBLE FREEDOM, ONLY TO BE DEVOURED AND DEFEATED MERE INCHES AWAY FROM HIS LIBERATION. AND EVEN WHEN HE FINALLY BREACHED THESE GATES, THERE WAS ONLY MORE FIRE AND BRIMSTONE TO GREET HIM ON THE OTHER SIDE. LUCIFER HAD FOOLED HIM ONCE AGAIN.

UNWILLING TO REMAIN IMPRISONED, GHOST RIDER ENLISTED A DEMON NAMED GREEXIX TO HELP HIM BURROW OUT OF HELL, UNAWARE THAT GREEXIX WAS ACTUALLY A DISGUISED LUCIFER, INTENT ON ESCAPING HELL HIMSELF.

JOHNNY BLAZE RETURNED TO EARTH, BUT HE INADVERTENTLY BROUGHT THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS ALONG WITH HIM. AND WHEN THEY MET AGAIN, IT WAS OUTSIDE AN ARIZONA GAS STATION WHERE INNOCENT CIVILIANS WERE KILLED AMIDST THE VIOLENCE.

NOW, GHOST RIDER HAS BEEN TRANSPORTED ELSEWHERE FOR COUNSEL WITH... DOCTOR STRANGE!

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AS SORCERER SUPREME OF THE REALM OF EARTH, I ORDER YOU TO ABANDON YOUR QUEST FOR VENGEANCE.
IMMEDIATELY.
FOSTER
FURTHER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DEMON LUCIFER WILL ONLY EXACERBATE AN ALREADY UNTENABLE SITUATION.
IF YOU WILL NOT CONCEDE, I WILL BE FORCED TO--
GHAKK--!
NICE TRY...
...LUCIFER.

VICIOUS CYCLE
PART THREE
BUT YOU'RE NOT GONNA FOOL ME AGAIN!
JACOB KIRBY KURTZBERG
ALEX
DANIEL WAY SCRIPT
JAVIER SALTARES BREAKDOWNS
MARK TEXEIRA FINISHES
DAN BROWN COLORS
VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERS
MICHAEL O'CONNOR ASSISTANT EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

A...A MOMENT...
...WHILE I CONSIDER MY RESPONSE.
...WHAT?
PERHAPS...
"BY THE POWER OF THE VISHANTI...
FFZZZOOOOOMMM!
"...I SHALL SNUFF YOUR INFERNAL FLAME!?"

HHRRRAAAAHH!
SSSHINK!
A VALIANT ATTEMPT...
...BUT YOU MISSED.
CHNK!
NO. I DIDN'T.

KRRROOOOOOMMMM!
IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, DEVIL, LISTEN UP: WHEREVER YOU ARE...
WHOEVER YOU ARE...
...I'M GONNA FIND YOU. THE DISGUISES AREN'T GONNA WORK-- I KNOW YOUR TRICKS!
YOU PLAYED ME FOR A SUCKER BEFORE, BUT NEVER AGAIN.

KABOOOM
ENOUGH!

I SUMMONED YOU HERE, TO THIS CONSECRATED GROUND, IN AN ATTEMPT TO REASON WITH YOU!
BUT I NOW SEE THAT YOU ARE BEYOND REASON!
YOUR EXISTENCE ON THIS PLANE--AND YOUR GROSS IGNORANCE OF THE POWER YOU SO CALLOUSLY WIELD--THREATENS ALL THE KNOWN REALMS, BOTH MORTAL AND IMMORTAL.
AS PROTECTOR OF THIS REALM, I WILL HOLD THE LINE, GHOST RIDER.
BY THE PRISTINE SOUL OF NUMECET...
...YOU WILL NOT LEAVE MY PRESENCE UNSCATHED.
OH, YEAH?
HE BRINGS UP A GOOD POINT, THOUGH--

"--HOW AM I GONNA LEAVE?"
HOL' ON--YOU SEE THAT?
SEE WHAT?
PULL OVER, MAN!
KRRRRRRRRRRK!
WELL, LOOKIT THAT...
YOU SEE ANYBODY...?
NOPE...
DUUUUUUDE...

WE GOOD?
YUP.
A'RIGHT-- LET'S GIT.
MAN, I FEEL LIKE CELEBRATIN'.
ME, TOO, MAN.
THERE'S A TRUCK STOP DOWN THE ROAD A WAYS-- WE'LL STOP IN AN' GET US A SIX-PACK.
SOUNDS LIKE A--
AW, NO!
WHAT HAPPENED-- SHE GET LOOSE?
NAW, MAN--
--IT'S THE LAW!

AW, MAN--I'M ON PROBATION! I CAN'T BE CAUGHT WITH NO--
"PROBATION"?! I'M ON PAROLE!
I'M GONNA GIT SENT BACK TA--
VVVRRRRRRRRROOOOOOMMMMM!!
STUPID PIGS...

AHHHHHHHHH!
WWAAAAAAGHHH!
SCREEEEEEEECHH--!
HEY!
HEEEEY!
Y'ALL COME BACK-- WE NEED SOME HELP!
PLEEEAAAASE!

IS THAT HOW YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA TAKE ME OUT, LUCIFER?
KUNG FU?
I'M NOT LUCI--
AAHHHHHRRRR!

DON'T KNOW WHERE THE FLAMES CAME FROM-- THEY JUST...
CAME...
AAH--!
YOU HAVE TESTED MY PATIENCE MORE THAN MY POWERS, FOUL SPIRIT...
...NOW, SUCCUMB TO THE HELL FROM WHENCE YOU ROSE!
WHAT WAS AB--

BWAKK!
KRAKK--
KABOOOMMM!!

...WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?
I CAN'T MOVE. I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING.
...AM I DEAD?
WHAT HAVE I DONE ..?
I SOUGHT ONLY TO CORRECT A TERRIBLE IMBALANCE, BUT I FEAR MY MORTAL IMPERFECTION HAS CAUSED ME TO FAIL...TO PROCEED RECKLESSLY BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...
...AND INTO THE ABYSS OF AN--
--GER...?

ALL OF A SUDDEN, I'M BEING PULLED FORWARD AND BACKWARD AT THE SAME TIME...
CH-CHANK!
CHNK!
CHANK!
...ING, LIKE I'M GETTING SWEPT UP IN A TORNADO--
HRNG--!
HAAARR!
--NO...A WHIRLPOOL.
DRAGGING ME DOWN INTO A LAKE OF FIRE.

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I [redacted] THE GHOST RIDER...
...I FEEL LIKE I'M BURNING.
VENGEANCE IS MINE.
THE PAIN IS LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER FELT BEFORE--IT FEELS LIKE MY SOUL IS ACTUALLY ON FIRE.
AND SOMEHOW, I KNOW THAT THE ONLY WAY IT WILL EVER STOP...
OPEN YOUR EYES, DEMON...
...AND LOOK UPON ME.
...IS IF I LET IT OUT.

AAGK--!
SQUEEECH!
OOOHH...
HEY, THERE!
ANYONE HOME?

I SEE YOU'VE BEEN HAVING FUN...
OH, YEAH.
FROM WHAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO PIECE TOGETHER, WHOEVER'S BODY THIS IS DIED ABOUT TWO DAYS AGO--HIS WIFE WAS OUT OF TOWN ON A SHOPPING TRIP WITH THEIR GRANDKIDS WHEN IT HAPPENED.
THEY CAME HOME THIS MORNING.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
BLK CITY REGIONAL HOSPITAL
WOKE UP ON A SLAB IN THE MORGUE, GRABBED THIS BIG SAWBLADE THING AND STARTED CHOPPING AWAY ON EVERYONE I SAW. IT WAS A REAL HOOT--"PSYCHO GRANNY GONE WILD."
GOT SOME WHEELS, TOO.
YEAH, I SAW THAT... NICE.
WANNA GO FOR A SPIN? RUN DOWN SOME SOCCER MOMS AT THE LOCAL SHOPPING CENTER?
WE'LL TAKE TURNS!
HMM... SOUNDS LIKE FUN...
...BUT I THINK I'D RATHER HANG AROUND HERE.
LAAAME...
NOT REALLY--MY "DAUGHTER" IS SUPPOSED TO BE HERE IN ABOUT AN HOUR TO PICK UP HER KIDS...I'D REALLY HATE TO MISS THAT.
BUT WHAT IF HE SHOWS UP FIRST?
WHO, GHOST RIDER?
I GET THE FEELING HE'S BUSY AT THE MOMENT...

"...BEING STUPID."
HMMMFFF--!
To Be Continued...

GHOST WRITERS

Welcome back, Ghosty fans! We could literally fill an entire comic book with all the great letters we received about issue #1, but who would buy that? Instead, we're cramming all our best ones into this letter column before issue #2's big flood drowns us.

Ghost Writer Mail,

I am 35 years old and oddly enough the first comic I read from cover to cover was *Ghost Rider #35*, the now classic "Death Race" story from the original series. I still have that book today. My son is 7 (the same age I was when I read it) and he loved it too.

We went to the comic shop today and got a copy of the new GR series, and he read it from cover to cover with me. This is an incredible look for old Flamehead! I loved it—the whole feel, overall look, and darker approach!! I am also glad Blaze is getting a shot at it again, because even though Dan Ketch was cool and it held us over, there is really only one real GR. Besides, the whole Cypress Hills cemetery thing just didn't capture the same feel as the cross-country JB Ghost Rider.

I am thrilled to be going down this road again and introducing my son to the wonderful world of comics and one of my favorite heroes.

Aaron Thompson
Cooper City, Florida.

Thanks for brainwashing your child on the good stuff, Aaron! Bring on the next generation of Flameheads!

Axel,

I was planning to wait for the trade paperback of the first Ghost Rider story arc, but instead I went out and purchased the first issue. Now I'm hooked! Having read most of the 1990's *Ghost Rider* run, I can safely write that I'm a fan, yet this first issue blew me away. There are so many good points to it that I just had to write, and I just had to place it on my standing order. I want to get it each month, as soon as possible.

Having been on the set of the upcoming Ghost Rider movie, I also wanted to mention just how amazing this film is going to be. Luckily I got to meet Mark Steven Johnson, who is a very cool guy and knows a hell of a lot about Ghost Rider.

Even luckier though, I was on the set when the crew blew up an entire section of shops along Little Lonsdale Street. Now tell me, is this going to be a cool movie or what?

Regards,
Maarten Bouw
Melbourne, Australia

If blowing up portions of Australia is the mark of a good movie, it sounds like it will be great!

Dear Ghost Writer team,

I'm including a picture of how devoted a Flamehead I am. The picture doesn't show my extensive collection of GR comics, my GR Heroclix, my GR first prints or first appearances, but it does show my most notable collections and my willingness to ink "Vengeance" on my right leg.

The tattoo was so natural—I fell asleep while it was getting inked. I proudly walked into the comic shop wearing shorts so I could show it off to all the fanboys. I've had the GR wallet you see for almost 10 years, and I have never switched it out for anything else.

I don't agree with what Garth Ennis did to my hero, but if his work causes the resurrection of a new GR, then make mine MARVEL!

Sean McGuinness
Internet

Now, that's commitment! Can anyone top Sean? Right now, I'm officially proclaiming him as Ghost Rider's #1 fan.

Dear Ghost Writer crew,

Thank you for restoring my favorite character of all time into the ranks of the Marvel Universe. I first fell in love with Ghost Rider about six years ago in a small comic book store in Reno, Nevada. I had gone there with the intention of expanding my Spider-Man collection when I came across Ol' Flamehead. On a whim, I bought an issue of the 90's Ketch series. That same day, I went back and bought about twelve more. My life as a comic book enthusiast hasn't been the same since.

When I returned to my hometown of Yuba City, California, I spent the next two years spending allowance after allowance on back issues until I eventually sold out the entire town. Store owners came to know me by name, and every time I entered a store, they would inform me on updates to their Ghost Rider section. I was only eleven then and very much in love with the fantasy world of graphic literature. I never had a chance to complete my collection, but I always imagined possible endings, each more epic and more ridiculous than the last.

I've gone years now without my childhood hero. The Garth Ennis mini was sufficient in giving me my much-needed fix, but I just couldn't put the knowledge of its inevitable end aside, and when it did stop, I was unsure of the fate of my favorite Spirit of Vengeance. That is, until I picked up *New Avengers*. When Blackout and Scarecrow escaped from prison as part of the massive breakout, I knew there was only one person in the (Marvel) universe that was equipped to apprehend them. Then, when the ongoing *Ghost Rider* series was finally announced, I felt like I was eleven all over again.

I just finished issue one and there are all kinds of questions I would like to ask, but I'm sure you're aware of almost anything I could pose. I place my full confidence in you to do Ghost Rider justice, and I'm sure you won't disappoint. However, I do have one question: I understand there was a Spider-Man crossover in 2001 that ended with Dan and Noble Kale reuniting and serving once more as the Spirit of Vengeance. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no further update on the Ketch Ghost Rider's status. So, what can we expect to see now that Blaze has returned? A team-up, perhaps? For what it's worth, that would rate at least a 9.8 on the geekasm scale.

With respect and hope for the future of Ghost Rider...

"The Mighty" Matt Higley
Internet

Danny Ketch and Johnny Blaze together? Geekasm indeed! We'll see what we can do!

Ghost Rider guys:

"So write in & let us know what we're doing right and wrong"

-Michael

Nuttin' wrong!!!!!!!!!! (so far) OMG you @#$*&@'n Rule!!!!!!! This is my THANK YOU letter.

I walked into a 7-11 a couple weeks ago w/ a coworker; I told him "Yeah, I like Ghost Rider, I wish they had his comic for sale." I found a *Moon Knight #3*, I told him, "&*#^ it, I'm buyin' this."

I told the 7-11 guy, "Hey, if you get *Ghost Rider*, I'll buy it off you." I don't think he spoke English, but I landed at the store again a week later, and thought there was No Hope, and then, from far away, I couldn't believe my beautiful eyes: *GHOST RIDER #1*!!!!! I couldn't believe it, it made my night.

Still, I knew it wasn't an ongoing. But when I brought them home (I bought two---the guy said, "Why 2?" I said, "GR's the Best"), I read that &$^%#, and you guys said it's an ongoing. I'm crying tears of joy. I always wanted a subscription and now I can have one, from the beginning. I love you guys for making me so happy... I called for a sub[scription] the next day and no matter what, this will be a complete set.

I'm getting more number ones for my friends: they all think GR's cool, even some girls. The story, as well, is &*#$'n AWESOME. Lucifer Lives, so strong and able, the comic was superb. Greexix was done perfectly, I dig the horses. Johnny's bike: what a beautiful cycle that is; I'm so happy it looks the way it does. Satan can't take that away (*nods head understanding-like*)!

Johnny's back. If he spends time on Earth or Hell, I'm just happy to be able to read my favorite character in the greatest universe, the Marvel one. Way, Texeira, and Saltares: you've done an awe-inspiring, heartwarming, hilarious, beautiful, magnificent *sniff* job on issue #1, and it was my pleasure to get a subscription to Ghost Rider. Thank you for that, and PLEASE, keep up the great work.

Sincerely,
Easy Eric S.
Internet

P.S. - I wanna be 95 and still have a sub[scription]. To all the Ghost Rider and non-Ghost Rider fans: get a subscription NOW while it's cheap and support the Rider for God's sake!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Call the number, go on the web, & buy, Buy, BUY!!!!!!!!!!!! Bye-bye.

Uhhh... yeah! What Easy Eric said! As you can see, Ghost Rider fans are clearly OUT OF THEIR MINDS... for Ghost Rider, that is. And we here at Marvel wouldn't want it any other way.

ADAM ROSENLUND
SPECIAL THANKS

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NEXT ISSUE:

LUCIFER'S PLOT REVEALED!

METAL DAVE
OCP